

NEW-YORK LEGISLATURE.

Specially Reported for The N. Y. Tribune.

SENATE. ALBANY, April 7, 1855.

THE NEW-YORK PRISON ASSOCIATION.

The Annual Report of the New York Prison Association was received this morning. It contains the following:

The arrests for offenses of all descriptions in the City of New York were:

In the year 1854..... 39,224

In the year 1853..... 39,224

In the year 1852..... 39,224

In the year 1851..... 39,224

The arrests for intoxication, and misdemeanors generally arising from intemperance, during the same years, were as follows:

1851. 1852. 1853. 1854.

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possessed of a naturally vicious disposition, or those in the habit of selling, or running in the streets or highways, without their masters.

Sec. 4. Dog sleighs are hereby abolished.

Sec. 5. This act shall take effect immediately.

Recess to 11 P. M.

EVENING SESSION.

BILLS PASSED.

For the sale of so much of the Common lands of the town of Hempstead as may be necessary to improve a public Cemetery for said town.

The CHAIRMAN announced as the Select Committee to investigate the management of Building Associations, and report to the Legislature, Messrs. J. B. Spencer, J. B. Spencer, and J. B. Spencer.

Authorizing Attorneys and Counselors of the Supreme Court to take affidavits.

To extend the time to complete the Buffalo and New York City Railroad.

Amendatory of the act combining into one act the several acts relating to the City of Albany, changing the time of Charter Election from fall to spring—second Tuesday in April.

Mr. E. L. SMITH rose to a question of privilege, saying that he noticed by The New-York Times his name was recorded as voting in the affirmative on the Temperance bill. He was not present when the vote was taken, and he would have been glad to have had his name recorded as voting in the negative.

To amend the act for the more effectual prevention of fires in the City of New York.

Making appropriations for the support of the Government for the fiscal year, commencing Oct. 1, 1855.

Adjourned.

LEGISLATION ON NEW-YORK MATTERS.

Correspondence of The N. Y. Tribune.

ALBANY, Saturday, April 7, 1855.

I have never known so much excitement in the Legislature, on New York matters, as has been manifested during the present session. First, the Police bill, proper; second, the Charter Amending bill, involving the Police Department; third, the Hell-Gate Navigation Company; and fourth, the Broadway Railroad Extension bill, each have, in their turn, elicited the most exciting debates. And all of these measures have had their lobby-men here swarming upon members on their going in and coming out, at their boarding-houses.

The Charter Amending bill hangs in the Senate, and it is said awaits only the proper time to be acted upon in the high-pressure manner, when it will steam through both Houses with flying colors.

The Hell-Gate Navigation Company has "struck a snag," and is likely to founder upon rocks far less dangerous as those which lurk beneath the desolated waters of the "Gate." Mr. Coleman rose, on Saturday, for the purpose, formally, of withdrawing the name of Mr. Charles A. Stetson as one of the incorporators. Mr. C. said Mr. S. was not named in the bill without his knowledge, and that he did not approve of the bill in any respect whatever. What iniquity, then, was displayed on the part of the projectors of this measure, in placing Mr. S.'s name in the bill! Were the object a worthy one, no better mode could be adopted to secure the influence of the best and most respected men in the House, than that of inserting the name of some such man as Mr. Stetson. But how signally have they failed when such a man comes out, and, in effect, pronounces the scheme a fraud.

The action of certain members of the House on Friday night, on the bill to "Amend the act relative to the 'Construction of Railroads in Cities,'" was the most singular I ever noticed. You have published the provisions of this act, which are in brief, permitting Railroad Companies, which have already commenced the construction of their roads, to continue the same through cities, notwithstanding any injunction or adjudication to the contrary. This bill was introduced for its third reading, one evening, a week or so ago, in the House, when the question was raised whether it was printed. It was found that it was not, and a motion was made to lay it aside, that it might be printed.

This motion was opposed by Mr. Blatchford and others, who said it was a simple act to render more distinct the act it was intended to amend. It was necessary for that purpose, and he wished that it should be read forthwith. Still, there were those who were dissatisfied, and the motion prevailed. It was several days, then, before the bill, in its printed form, made its appearance—though a very short bill—and it did not sleep several days more before it was again introduced by the Clerk's clerk. Before its reading was concluded, Mr. Coleman rose and denounced the bill in unmeasured terms. He had just been informed that it was one of the worst bills ever attempted, by fraud, to be foisted upon the City of New York. It was blind in its title and in its provisions, yet it contained matter of vital importance to the citizens of New York, who knew nothing of it. The debate was continued by others, who also denounced it, and it being thought that the bill could not be passed, it was suffered to go to a vote. Mr. Coleman left his seat, and went into the cloak-room, which was crowded with lobby-men. A large number of members voted against the bill, and during the call of the absentees Mr. Coleman returned to his seat, and asked that his name might be recorded in the affirmative! Everybody looked at him in surprise. He stated that he had been misinformed with regard to the character of the bill. It had been before the citizens of New York; they knew all about it, and waited it. Mr. Blatchford also voted for it. Then commenced a general changing of votes from the negative to the affirmative, and after holding back the announcement of the vote some fifteen minutes, the bill was declared passed.

On assembling the next morning, Mr. Blatchford took the first opportunity to rise and declare that a fraud of the deepest dye had been perpetrated on the House, in the passage of this bill. He then proceeded to state that the bill had not been properly brought before the House, and that it had by fraud reached the position for a third reading. He concluded by moving a Committee of Investigation with power to send for persons and papers. The Chair appointed Messrs. Blatchford, Stevens, Hull, Seymour, and Fitch, such Committee; but afterward stated that it was found, by reference to the Journal, that a Select Committee was duly appointed on the bill, who reported it complete. It thus reached its third reading—the House not knowing, scarcely, the title of the bill. This being the case, the Committee of Investigation will have but very little to report, and the bill will go to the Senate.

I have been thus particular in relating this case, merely to show how, at this stage of the session, matters of the utmost importance can elude the vigilance of 128 supposed to be very watchful men.

You will observe that notice has been given of a bill to amend the act for the Prevention of Intemperance, Pauperism and Crime. There is scarcely time enough this session for the passage of such an act, but inasmuch as several friends of Prohibition, in the House, were, by the rules, debarred the privilege of discussing or amending the amendments of the Senate—and were forced to vote for them in a body—it is no more than due to these members, at least, that they should have the privilege of putting on record what they would have done in the premises, had the opportunity been offered them.

The Committee say:

There exist in the State many associations of business men holding valuable charters from, or in the name of, the State, as corporations, or general law, enacted by the Legislature, and of men employing large sums of the capital of foreign corporations, upon whom it would, in the judgment of your Committee, be more expedient and just to impose additional taxes than upon Railroad Companies. No extraordinary taxation as corporations, or general law, is now recommended. Justice and the present exigencies of the Treasury will be satisfied by equalizing the

public burdens resting upon such bodies of men, and by requiring their contributions for the maintenance of the Government, to be paid directly to the State.

It may be said with truth that, as the Legislature, acting in behalf of the entire people of the State, has granted to Banking, Insurance, and Trust Companies, franchises for the benefit of all, it is just that the taxes, which are charged upon and paid by them, should inure to the benefit of all the people of the State. Such a plan is respectfully recommended.

There will be little difficulty in charging such a tax upon the capital stock, surplus capital, reserved funds and surplus profits of Banks, Insurance, Trust and Canal Companies chartered by the Legislature, or organized as corporations under our laws, and upon the amount of capital actually employed and invested within this State, by Corporations chartered in Europe or in other States, and transacting corporate business here. In the opinion of the committee a tax of one and a quarter per cent. upon the capital stock of these institutions within our borders, in lieu of all other taxes, may be properly imposed.

As to the other tax, the capital stock, for the money invested, indicate the pecuniary value of a Railroad, it would not be just to adopt in reference to them the criterion of value that is taken in reference to Banks and Insurance Companies. In respect to them, their annual earnings are what indicate their pecuniary worth, and the value of their stock in market. A charge of two and a half per cent. upon their earnings, to be paid into the Treasury, would, in the opinion of the committee, subject them to as heavy a relative burden as that suggested above for Banks and Insurance Companies. All sections of any said railroads which are beyond our borders would not be subject to the burden.

These assessments are recommended to be made as a substitute for, and to be in lieu of, all other taxes upon the corporations charged, whether State, county, municipal, or otherwise, and in lieu of the local taxes now levied upon the stock of such corporations, and as compensation for the loss, it is recommended that the people of the State be relieved from the existing direct taxes which are levied for the support of Government.

It is confidently believed that changes like these in the taxation and application of the taxes charged upon corporations will have the effect of equalizing the burdens and the expenses of Government, and, except in a few localities, will give more general satisfaction than the system now in force.

That the present system of taxation upon corporations is grossly unequal and arbitrary, admitted. The limits of this report forbid an extended exposition of its radical defects. In many towns through which railroads traverse the taxes levied upon those corporations are sufficient, and they have been frequently applied to the building of school-houses, and in two instances to the support of a State Prison. The railroads, without taxing the property of the citizens of the districts more than nominally, and only for the purpose of amassing the terms of the local law, while in adjacent districts through which no railroad passed, the citizens of necessity were required to defray all such expenses.

Local taxes for other purposes have been assessed on railroad corporations in the same unequal manner—an inequality which appears very striking in connection with the fact that railroads augment the value of adjacent property by the cheapened transportation to market afforded by their lines, and by the employment for the products of the country, and after thus conferring such benefits, are made to bear most of the burden of the local taxes.

Similar instances abound to indicate the inequality and injustice of the local taxes imposed on Banks and Insurance Companies; but the limits of this report will not admit their enumeration. They will readily occur to every member of the Senate.

In order to carry out the views expressed in this report, the Committee report a bill containing the following provisions:

1. Capital stocks, surplus capital, reserved funds and surplus profits of banks, insurance, canal, iron and coal companies, whose business is wholly or partially in this State, to pay one and a quarter per cent. per annum, in quarterly installments.

2. Railroads chartered by the Legislature in this State, to pay two and a half per cent. on their annual earnings, in quarterly installments.

Sections 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 detail the manner of ascertaining and levying assessments, and the duties of officers of corporations.

10. Roads chartered by the Legislature, and companies taxed by this act from any other State or local law whatever.

CANADA.

TORONTO, Tuesday, April 3, 1855.

The Government is carrying its measures by sweeping majorities. The second reading of the Militia bill was carried by a vote of 75 against 24, and the new Elective Legislative Council was supported, on the second reading, by a vote of 80 against 4. The Ministry took the ground, on the Militia bill, that the measure introduced no new principle; that the only question it raised related to an efficient organization of the Militia. The chief opposition came from the Ronges, who contended that it made the colony its own defender, without giving it those privileges which appertain to countries capable of undertaking their own defense; that we have no interest in the present war; that it is the duty of the Parent State to protect the colony, till the latter becomes independent; that if England should happen to quarrel with the United States on her own account, that would be her affair, not ours; that we ought not to make any military display that will irritate the United States; that it is our interest to keep at peace; and one member at least, Mr. Papin, declared that he would not, in any event, take up arms on the side of England against the United States. An Upper Canada member, Mr. Wilson, of London, opposed the measure, on the ground that it was not safe to put arms into the hands of Irishmen, and that a nation which naturally excited much national feeling, and which Mr. Wilson found the necessity of explaining, but, in doing so, he only affirmed it with greater distinctness.

The opposition to the Elective Legislative Council is almost nil. It is based on predictions that the measure will necessitate a complete change in our system of government; that it will lead to the adoption of American institutions in all their integrity, and perhaps to annexation. These arguments, however, produce no effect upon the House. They were used in a previous session, and they did not change a vote. They are now repeated with no better success. Perhaps the favorite objection to the bill is, that it will bring the Government to a dead lock in this way. One House will sustain the Government, and the other oppose it; and the result will be that no business will be done. But, as I said before, all the arguments against the bill fall pointless. Nobody regards them. Not that there is any very strong enthusiasm in favor of the measure. By no means; and it is, to say truth, somewhat difficult to account for the large majorities by which it is supported. There seems no reason to suppose that it will not become a law.

The question on which the most intense feeling has been exhibited, is that arising out of the location of the Government. By an arrangement entered into in 1849, after the Parliament buildings in Montreal were destroyed by a mob, Government was to take up its quarters every alternate year in Toronto and Quebec. The question is strictly one of prerogative, to be decided by the Governor, on the advice of his Council. In 1849, however, the sense of the representatives of the people was taken on the question, and the decision was in favor of alternate Parliaments in different sections of the Province. The Legislative Council, however, did not agree; it protested against leaving Montreal. Well, Government came to Toronto; but, instead of remaining here four years, it remained only two. Mr. Lafontaine, who then had everything pretty much his own way, contending that the intention was to move at the expiration of the Parliament. Government therefore moved to Quebec in the fall of 1851; and next fall the four years' term will be out. Montreal has always felt keenly the deprivation of the seat of Government, and never ceased to try to get it back. The advocates of that city are of course great advocates for a permanent seat of Government, and they descend with great unctiousness on its economy, its safety and its wisdom. They aimed first to get a declaration in favor of a permanent seat of Government; and trusted to be able to make Montreal the place on which the choice for a site would fall afterward. It is impossible to convey any idea of

the feeling that the question created. It was not a mere local question; it was whether Lower Canada with its numerically inferior population should make Upper Canada tributary to her; and if it had been decided against Upper Canada an immediate agitation for the repeal of the Union would have been set on foot in this section of the Province. The first vote on a motion to pledge the Government to move this year, was adverse to Upper Canada. Upon this an outburst of indignation proceeded from many of the Upper Canada members, including Sir Allan McNab and Mackenzie, which the bad effect of Lower Canada was pronounced in the strongest terms. These denunciations had their effect, and in all the subsequent votes taken, Upper Canada had a majority; not always large, but still a majority. Government will move to this city in the course of the next summer.

A proposal of Mr. Mackenzie to condole with the relatives of Mr. Hume, was rejected by the House only, on the ground that it would set an inconvenient precedent, which might be used in the case of very different individuals in future. Regarding the merits of Mr. Hume there was no difference of opinion whatever, Sir Allan McNab admitting them in quite as great a degree as Mr. Mackenzie.

SLAVERY IN CUBA.

The following Royal order, issued by the Spanish Ministry on the 12th ult., or four days after the debate in the Cortes, which has been so contradictorily reported, settles the question as to the intentions of that Government with regard to Slavery in Cuba. We translate from a French version, not having the original Spanish at hand:

"Your Excellency: I have possessed her Majesty of the contents of your Excellency's dispatch of the 12th of February last, and of the documents to which it refers, as well as of the explanations verbally made to the Government by General Lasalle. (Her Majesty is fully conversant with the subject.)

The Government, in the exercise of its duty, and in its characteristic loyalty, have given a reply, having for its purpose to withdraw this law from the Spanish Society of which it is a principal member.

As to the question of the abolition of slavery in its entirety, every moral sentiment, it has been accompanied in this instance, as in every other, by the natural allies: faith, honesty, and the wish to consummate the duty which is imposed upon it.

But Divine Providence not permitting that as yet all should be true, the Government, in its duty, and in its characteristic loyalty, have given a reply, having for its purpose to withdraw this law from the Spanish Society of which it is a principal member.

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